LOCK OUT THE LANDLORDS!

ANTI-EVICTION RESISTANCE 1929-36

Lock Out The Landlords!
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Eviction Resistance 1929- 1936.

Although evictions have long been an unwanted part of life for working class Australians, the Depression years saw their numbers skyrocket. Many of those who lived through the era recall that nearly every family in areas such as Newtown, Richmond and Redfern suffered one, if not many evictions. 6484 eviction orders were sent out from Sydney Courts alone between December 31 1934 and September 30 1935. Barely a town or suburb in Australia was left untouched.

Unemployed people often organised against the evictions through branches of the Unemployed Workers Movement (UWM). Dominated, but not wholly controlled by communists the UWM campaigned for a decent level of dole and against "work for the dole" schemes, dole forms and other forms of harassment. Their main position was that the unemployed were not responsible for their situation and should not have to suffer for it. To achieve their goals they organised protests, deputations, soup kitchens, "dole strikes" and occupations. A number of UWM members spent time in prison as a result of their actions.

The UWM also helped set up Anti Eviction Committees (AECs), many of which lobbied for the unemployed to be exempt from rent. These groups employed a number of strategies against bailiffs, landlords, finance companies and others who preyed on the unemployed. The committees would approach people in danger of eviction and offer to set up pickets and provide food, childcare, help with moving, etc. They would usually then go to visit the owner or agent and warn them that any eviction would be resisted. Deputations would also go to councils and government departments to try and force them into providing facilities for the homeless. On some occasions the picketers would occupy and barricade houses and on others they would take revenge on the owners by destroying them. As the 1930s wore on a number of state governments shifted the site of resistance to the courts by increasing the ability of tenants to appeal eviction orders. Some states were also forced to provide rental subsidies as the decade wore on. Whilst the AECs began to focus more on providing legal representation other forms of resistance were still required.

In the countryside thousands of farmers saw their land auctioned off beneath them by the banks they were mortgaged to. Whilst most refused to employ radical tactics (and lost their land as a result), the smaller ones were more inclined to fighting back. A number of auctions were disrupted by groups mobilising farmers to prevent anyone taking part in them. Sadly, specific reports of rural eviction resistance are few and far between.

The following chronology lists just a small number of the hundreds (if not thousands) of actions taken

around Australia during the depression. The information presented here has been drawn largely from the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) newspaper *Workers Weekly* . The early 1930s saw the CPA in its most militant grassroots phase with its activists and papers encouraging as much resistance as possible. By the mid 1930s the party was opting for a "popular front" strategy and began to woo middle class and trade union support by moderating its stance and tactics. As a result information in the *Workers Weekly* trickles to a halt by 1936 despite the fact that eviction resistance continued through to the war. The sexism of the CPA also meant that reports of women's involvement were rare with generally only male participants listed. For these reasons and others reports from mainstream papers and other sources have helped flesh out accounts.

Despite their limitations the listings provide us with a fascinating insight into the daily struggles of the time. With an extended economic slump affecting Australia they also demonstrate that organised grass roots action can make a difference.

July 9 1929, Adelaide.
One thousand unemployed gather to stop a family from being evicted whilst the father is out looking for work. The lone policeman present had already shot the family terrier in "self defence" and threatens the crowd with his revolver. No-one is shaken however and despite the arrival of police reinforcements the owner agrees to let the stay until another house can be found.
October 1929, Sydney.
Labor Party Secretary FF Ward institutes numerous attempts to evict unemployed from his properties around Sydney. Despite pickets operating day and night a squad of police, troopers and twelve bailiffs finally carry them out.
December 10 1929, Adelaide.
Unemployed unsuccessfully resist an eviction despite one of them being severely injured by police.
April 1930, Perth.
200 unemployed remove furniture that is about to be seized for debts from a house in central Perth. The *West Australian* reports that "The entire removal operations were carried out in about ten minutes and the work was done so quietly that even the immediate neighbours were not aware of what was taking place."
May 28 1930, Sydney.
A large number of unemployed meet the landlord and police at a house in Madeira St, Surrey Hills. After a stand off twelve police move in breaking the picket and arresting two Unemployed Workers Movement (UWM) speakers.
June 1930, Sydney.
Reverend S.W. McKibbin of the Sydney Central Methodist Mission during his daily rounds encounters a woman arguing with bailiffs and second hand furniture dealers. When the four men move to throw her out of the house McKibbin steps in barring their way and threatening to "Dong any man who tries to enter." The bailiff threatens him with arrest, but when that fails to have any effect the eviction team concede defeat.

"Wasn't there any sympathy for the unemployed amongst the police?"
"No. These men were picked... they hated the unemployed and in every case would beat them with batons... The brutality went one. No difference between Labor and Conservative governments."
Stan Moran in "Weevils in the Flour."

July 1930, Sydney.
A number of men smash up a house in Clovelly from which a family had just been evicted. 21 leading UWM militants are later framed up (despite few of them possibly having been there) with some receiving sentences of up to 8 months.

August 8 1930, Brisbane.
Unemployed swagmen camping out in Davis Park repel nightly attacks from police and vigilantes.
August 15 1930, Sydney.
Despite being unable to prevent an eviction members of the UWM force the local government to place a family in another house.
September 1930, Australia.
UWM branches begin officially organising regular response teams to hold up evictions. Large meetings are held throughout Australia.
September 1930, Perth.
The *West Australian* reports that in Victoria Park and suburbs of Fremantle large groups under the auspices of AECs have been rallying to intimidate bailiffs out of doing their duties.
December 12 1930, Sydney.
The Sydney Furnishing Company comes to repossess furnishing from a leading UWM member who has fallen behind in his payments. Picketing prevents the removal of goods for two hours. Eventually the company's representative is convinced it would be better for him if he just left the property there.
January 12 1931, Western Australia.
The Wheatgrowers Union of WA (WUWA) conference resolves to blacklist local traders and banks who harass or evict needy farmers.
February 4 1931, Melbourne.
600 march to an unemployed worker's home in Larnoo Avenue, West Brunswick, to stop bailiffs from taking his possessions to recover debts. The bailiffs are confronted and most are convinced to leave. However when a moneylender and the head bailiff refuse to go they are dragged out and beaten up. Police arrive and arrest one person, but are surrounded and forced to let him go. During the melee the money lender's car is destroyed.
February 20 1931, Sydney.
Unemployed take over a Glebe Council meeting demanding a hearing on a variety of issues related to housing. They are forcibly evicted by Labor councillors and the police.
March 1931, Sydney.
The Anti Eviction Committee (AEC) of the Surrey

Hills UWM wages war against the Permanent Trustee Company who have been engaged in evicting a Greek worker from 3 Chapel St, Woolloomooloo. Two separate attempts by the police to evict him are defeated.

March 1931, Narrogin.

United action by farmers successfully prevents an auction with the farm owner buying his goods back at a pittance. The success of the action sees WUWA representatives touring WA to encourage other farmers to organise in a similar way.

"Well, they lined up this big farm near Narrogin and they were going to sell it. There must have been 1000 farmers there... Any strangers were taken to one side and told to go or stand outside or shut up. If he opened his mouth he was told he would cop it. Well, harvesters were bought for a shilling, horses flat rate were six pence, whole pens of chooks, machinery and cows were two pence each. The auctioneers had to go through the business and formally sold everything and received cash on the fall of the hammer, and they were given back to the owner and he simply continued on. They had about three sales like that and showed that nothing could be achieved so the sales stopped."

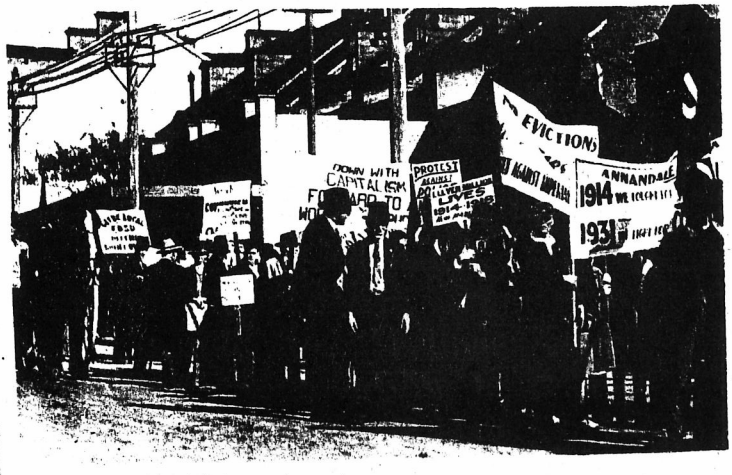
C. Hodgson in "A Fine Country to Starve In."

March 6 1931, Brisbane.

A woman left alone by the death of her husband is forced to forgo her piano to maintain her mortgage. The loan sharks later attempt to take everything she owns, but are defeated when UWM members chase off their hired thugs and move the woman's furniture to a safe location.

March 7 1931, Moornaming.

An auction of farm property fails to sell anything when farmers intercede. One man puts in a bid, but "a number of spectators rushed the purchaser and



jostled him, warning him that should he make a further bid he would be dealt with drastically." Eventually the property is sold in a private sale, but this only creates further trouble for the bank.

March 12 1931, Melbourne.

The "Rank and File Association" musters unionists to picket a house in Footscray where an old man is due to be evicted. The police move in beating 3 unconscious and inflicting serious head wounds on 12 others. The next day 300 workers march to Footscray Station where they pinion the police

guarding the gates and travel without tickets to a mass anti eviction rally in the city.

March 13 1931, Sydney.

An eviction is initially prevented at Donelly St, Balmain. After the fracas the tenant is unnerved and decides to move out anyway.

April 1931, Sydney.

A spate of evictions are contested by the unemployed. A house at 81 Booth St, Anandale, is occupied to prevent eviction. In Balmain two evictions are frustrated and the court orders withdrawn. In Bondi a house due for eviction has a banner placed out front and local streets are chalked up with information. A house at 41 Richie St, Granville sees the landlord cancel eviction orders after being confronted in his office. On hearing of another eviction in Granville UWM members attempt to roust a landlord out of bed at night, but are chased off by his daughter wielding a shotgun. They later defeat the eviction after 60 picket the house for a fortnight.

April 1931, Belka.

At a farm auction men remove their hats as if at a funeral as each item goes up for sale. Due to pressure from the farmers there are no bids made and WUWA members later remove wheels from a

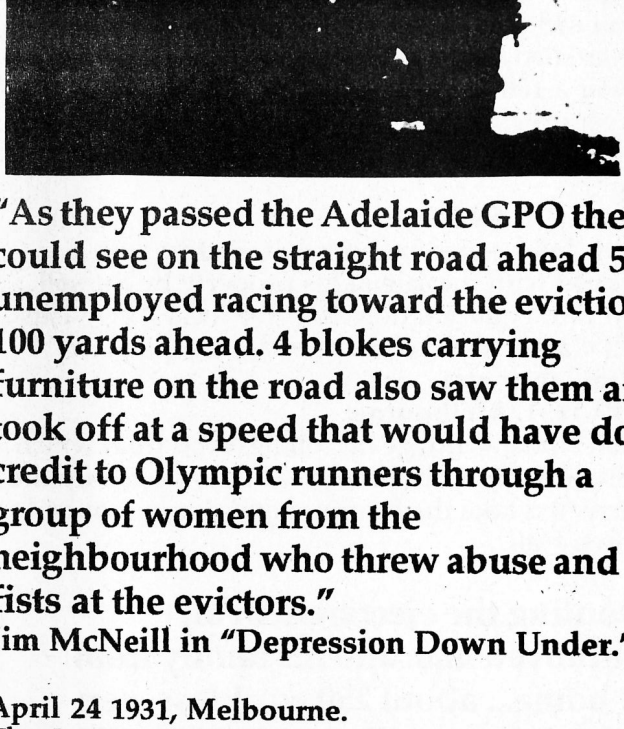
wagon and put them in a dam to prevent repossession.

April 1 1931, Melbourne.

The Richmond UWM prevent five police from entering a house in Richmond. Whilst the police are tied up a bailiff is spotted in a nearby telephone box. After being attacked he flees into a shop hiding until eventually rescued by 18 cops.

April 16 1931, Sydney.

100 picket a house in Wallsend forcing a cancellation of the eviction order.



"As they passed the Adelaide GPO they could see on the straight road ahead 500 unemployed racing toward the eviction 100 yards ahead. 4 blokes carrying furniture on the road also saw them and took off at a speed that would have done credit to Olympic runners through a group of women from the neighbourhood who threw abuse and fists at the evictors."

Jim McNeill in "Depression Down Under."

April 24 1931, Melbourne.

The Commercial Banking company obtain a court order to evict a family in Brunswick, but when the bailiff arrives he is confronted by a crowd of 100 who assault and evict him. The crowd then grab the family's furniture and march to Brunswick Town Hall where they dump it in the portico. They then return to the house and demolish the front fence and break all the windows, doors and fireplaces before smashing pipes and flooding the place.

April 31 1931, Sydney.

The North Illawarra Council attempt to evict an unemployed camp of over 80 men citing unsanitary conditions. This is defeated by a large protest which then goes on to picket a house where a widow and 14 year old son are being turned out.

May 1 1931, Melbourne.

The UWM forces Fred Symonds, who owns 60 houses in Collingwood alone, to bribe his tenants to leave after picketers prevent an eviction for two days. An eviction attempt at 463 Victoria Street,

Eviction At Tighe's Hill

TWENTY SERIOUSLY HURT IN GHASTLY FRAY

HOUSE WAS GARRISONED LIKE A FORTRESS OF WAR

UGLY SCENES OF CARNAGE

Collingwood takes place the same day after picketers are rousted by police.

May 1 1931, Lakemba.

A branch of the UWM gathers 60 people together to resist an eviction despite the fact that many people had gone to the May Day rally. Six police arrive and order them to leave as more police are on the way. They are in turn warned that for every worker hurt two cops will suffer. The family threatened with eviction includes two returned soldiers so whilst the police are tied up arguing a local RSL is mobilised and over a 1000 ex soldiers arrive. Local shopkeepers come down and donate food and the owner agrees to give the family at least an extra fortnight.

May 15 1931, Sydney.

A small shopkeeper in Oxford St, Paddington is threatened with the sale of his property by Russell Garvin Ltd. A deputation from the local AEC visits Russell Garvin's and persuades the company to withdraw their sale.

May 19 1931, Melbourne.

250 men storm a cottage in Collingwood from which a family had earlier been evicted. They smash up the property and take the furniture and dump it outside the Town Hall.

"Resenting the ejectment of an unemployed man and his family from their home... about 250 workless men damaged the dwelling yesterday... The unemployed men broke all the windows at the back of the building, and also those in the front of the upper storey."
***Argus*, 20 May 1931.**

May 22 1931, Lakemba.

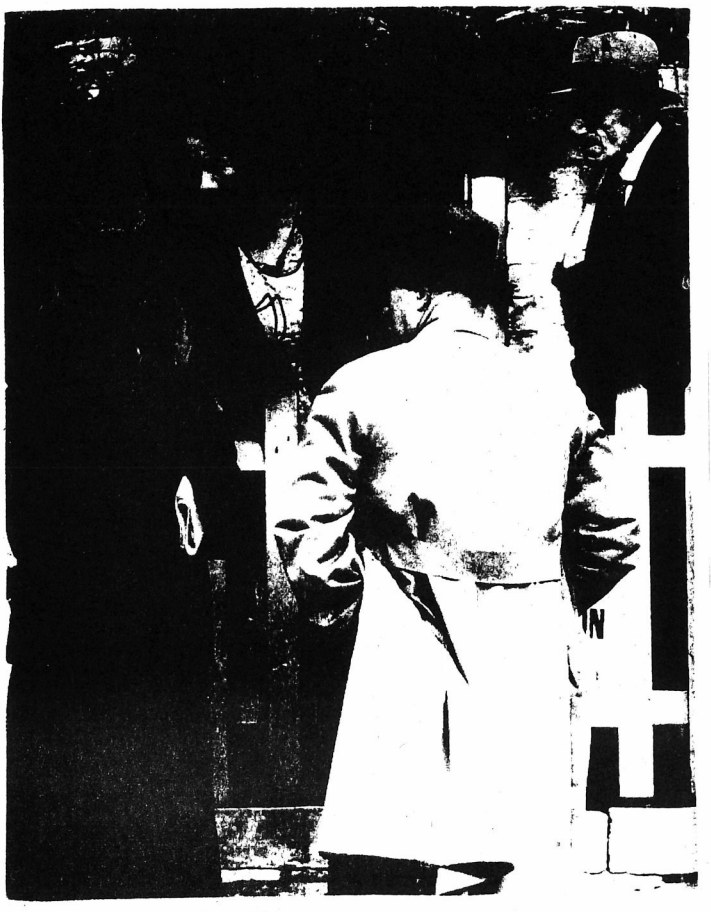
Pickets and an occupation of a house defeat an eviction and result in the resident being able to stay on rent free until he can find a job. Following the victory a huge party is thrown on the lawn.

May 22 1931, Melbourne.

A bailiff attempting to evict a house in Grant St, South Melbourne is met by a picket of over 1000 people. He agrees not to evict.

May 29 1931, Sydney.

Members of the Newtown UWM clash with fascist New Guard members at a picket in Ivy Street, Newtown.



May 30 1931, Sydney.
A major riot breaks out when police attempt to evict the McNamara family from their house in Douglas Street, Redfern. The UWM pickets the house, padlocks the front door and hoists up a red flag on the verandah. On May 30 the police smash their way through the gate and break the locks with a sledge hammer. They then break through the other barricades and fight occupiers armed with pick handles and other implements. A crowd gathers to prevent their arrest, but are warned off with revolvers.

"If the owner did get a person out, the next morning there would be no house left. The unemployed just stripped it. They'd pull these little houses down, take them for fire wood. They'd even take the chimney. The owner would come and all he'd have left was a block of land."
Dot and Tom Hills in "Weevils in the Flour"

June 1931, Sydney.
The Workers Weekly (WW) claims over seventy anti eviction victories have occurred in Sydney over the past few months.
June 1931, Methuel.
200 farmers prevent the sell off of a property by turning up and threatening anyone who tries to put in a bid.

June 6 1931, Sydney.
UWM members are tricked by Labor Party councillors into believing an eviction would be held off at Douglas St, Redfern. When they leave only a skeleton picket it is attacked by police who draw guns and beat all present. Reinforcements arrive, but it is too late to stop the eviction or rescue those arrested.

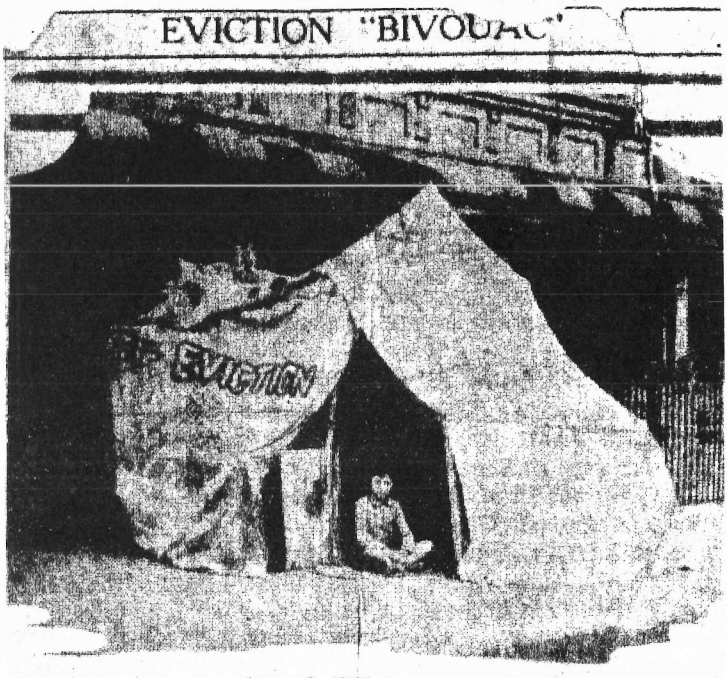
June 12 1931, Sydney.
Police join with hired thugs to attack a picket in Stirling Street, Leichhardt.

June 17 1931, Sydney.
A bungalow named "Auld Reekie" located in Brancourt Avenue, Bankstown, becomes the site of ones of the bloodiest eviction fights of the Depression. Members of the UWM and the tenants, the Parsons family, barricade the cottage with sandbags and barbed wire. Armed with axe handles, iron pipes, garden forks and other implements they occupy the house. Attacking early on the day before the eviction order became operative 40 police surround the house and are met with a volley of stones. Ten are injured including an Inspector White who suffers a fractured skull. Enraged the police open fire hitting Owen Kendall in the skull and Alexander Eatock in the thigh. The police then force their way in, brutally beating and arresting the occupiers. One man charged, John Bowles (who had been at the Gallipoli landing) described the police as "armed bandits" and the violence as some of the worst he had ever seen. A later trial sees 16 men found guilty of "wilfully obstructing and resisting" the police. 14 of them receive sentences of 12 months. Andrew Eatock receives 18 months, in part, it is believed because of his Aboriginality. His brother Noel later received the heaviest penalty ever imposed for rioting due to his involvement in the Glebe Dole Riot. The whole situation is later exposed as a set up when the owner of the house admits to being put under pressure by police and estate agents who feared that the precedents of resistance being set would cause them to "lose a fortune". In the coming months large protests against the sentences take place across Australia.

"At Bankstown and at Newtown,
We made the cops feel sore,
We fought well,
They got hell,
As met them at the door,
We met them at the door boys,
We met them at the door,
At Newtown and at Bankstown,
We made the cops feel sore."
Depression era song.

June 19 1931, Brisbane.
Seven workers are arrested whilst resisting an eviction.
June 20, 1931.
Following a heavily contested eviction a woman remains with her furniture in Ramsgate Ave, Bondi, refusing to leave until she is given a new home.
June 24 1931, Broken Hill.
Over 1000 assemble at Broken Hill Trade Hall Council and march to a house threatened with eviction. Those present barricade the house. After the crowd disperses the police arrive, but the small numbers remaining pressure the owner into halting the eviction.
July 3 1931, Brisbane.
UWM members occupying a house in Issac St, Spring Hill are batoned and evicted.
July 3 1931, Erigola.
Over 100 farmers picket a farm and chase off the mortgagor when he arrives.
July 15 1931, Sydney.
A UWM picketer caught trashing a house in Glebe reputedly states that he did it to "wake up Lang and Gosling and by the time we smash a few more they will come our way."
July 16 1931, Melbourne.
An attempt to evict the Albert Park UWM President is defeated and the eviction order withdrawn after

The Battle of Bankstown



OUT THEY GO. VICTIMS OF THE TIMES, for all the world to see! Bobbie McWilliams sits inside the tarpaulin mercifully cast over his parents' belongings outside their erstwhile Redfern home. Evicted . . . homeless. Doesn't your heart go out to them?

his house at 16 Withers Street is mass picketed. The estate agent responsible for the property, Richard Young and Company, are chalked with slogans stating "Eviction King" and "Throws unemployed women and children into the streets." Whilst the mainstream media later claims the president had reached a rental agreement the UWM denies it.

July 18 1931, Melbourne.

300 men gather at a house on the corner of Alexander Parade and Forest Street Collingwood to prevent an eviction of a woman and several children. Although the woman wishes to move to another house those gathered claim that it is unfit for human habitation and encourage her to hold out for something better.

July 31 1931, Australia.

The *Workers Weekly* claims that over two hundred evictions have been prevented in the last eight months.

August 12 1931, Melbourne.

1000 residents gather to protest a number of evictions taking place in Hanover St, Fitzroy. Sergeant Murphy of the Fitzroy police is accompanied by a bailiff in a furniture van. When the crowd move in to confront them, a trap is sprung and thirty police leap out of the back of the van batoning the crowd. Armed police are then stationed at the house to prevent it being burnt down in retribution.

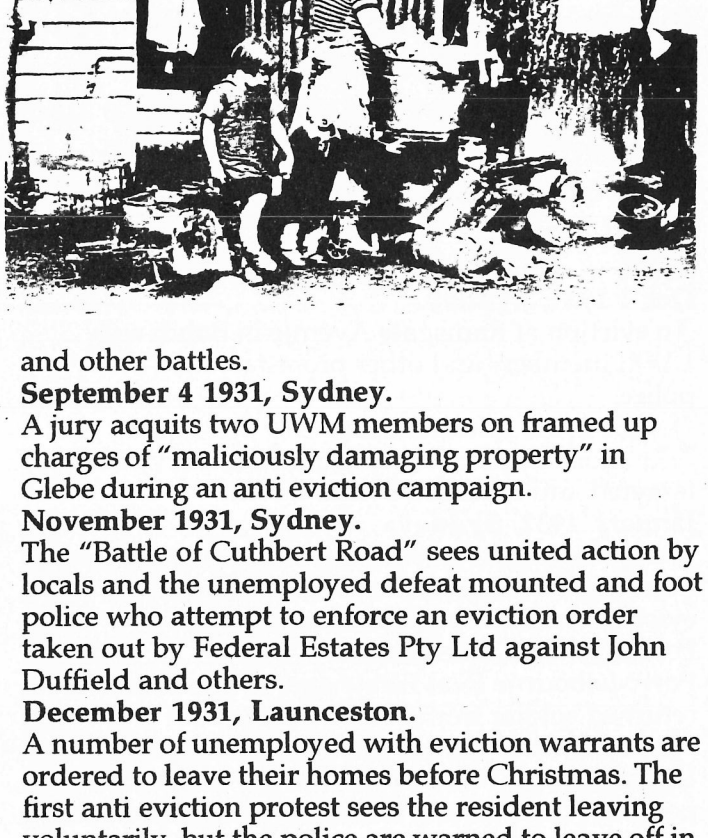
August 21 1931, Kurri.

A mass meeting threatens a local landlord with mine strikes if evictions go ahead.

August 28 1931, Brisbane.

The UWM sets up a No Rent campaign demanding that the unemployed be given a rent amnesty. Campaigns are set up across the country in the following months.

September 1931, Melbourne.
Large numbers of unemployed are evicted from empty railcars in Jolimont. Demonstrations and protests see the Federal Government turn over the Broadmeadows Military Camp to the homeless. The camp's military discipline however sees the men walk out and squat a row of terraces in Brunswick. The owner is later forced to rent the terraces cheaply to the men who use them as a base for anti eviction



and other battles.
September 4 1931, Sydney.
A jury acquits two UWM members on framed up charges of "maliciously damaging property" in Glebe during an anti eviction campaign.
November 1931, Sydney.
The "Battle of Cuthbert Road" sees united action by locals and the unemployed defeat mounted and foot police who attempt to enforce an eviction order taken out by Federal Estates Pty Ltd against John Duffield and others.
December 1931, Launceston.
A number of unemployed with eviction warrants are ordered to leave their homes before Christmas. The first anti eviction protest sees the resident leaving voluntarily, but the police are warned to leave off in others. The next eviction sees the police remove furniture, but the removalist is warned by picketers and decides to leave the scene. The furniture is then picked up and a procession forms marching to the Town Hall. One the way a stop is made at the landlord's office where he is hassled by the crowd. At the Town Hall the furniture is stacked up to provide a platform for speakers. Over 2000 assemble and the police are pressured into providing accommodation for the two men who they have evicted. When the two are evicted again a few days later, a deputation goes to visit the Chief Secretary Mr James. They knock on his office door, but James is in another room and tries to sneak away. Just as he reaches the exit door he is hit in the head with a hard loaf of bread. Knocked to the ground and surrounded he finally agrees to find the men new accommodation.

"Then something happened. The members of the AEC each grabbed a piece of furniture on the street, pushed the bailiffs aside and dashed into the house. The people surged forward and women and kids all helped put the things back. It had taken 3 men hours to evict us; it took less than 10 minutes to return the furniture to the house. Then we closed the door. We waited for something to happen... to our surprise we saw the cops and bailiffs walking to their cars. So their bluff was called! And the illegal evictions which firms were attempting at several suburbs were also stopped."
Daisy McWilliams in "Depression Down Under."

Dec 4 1931, Sydney.
An eviction at Ramsgate Avenue in Bondi sees UWM members and other protesters held off by police.
Dec 24 1931, Launceston.
A landlord responsible for a number of evictions is targeted and harassed by the UWM.
January 1932, Sydney.
The UWM begin representing workers in court on a more regular and organised basis. Many more eviction warrants begin to be contested.
February 1932, Melbourne.
Port Melbourne Real Estate agents decide to evict a returned soldier from Princess Street, but are blocked by members of the United Council of the Unemployed (UCU). From the 5th to the 15th (the period of the warrant) hundreds picket the house and are provided with meals by locals. The agent, Chapman is thus prevented from evicting the residents before the warrant expires, but vows to try again. The UCU then institute a "No Rent" campaign leafleting all his tenants.
February 1932, Melbourne.
When landlord H.C. Barett evicts a family from a cottage in Cobden Street, South Melbourne 400 people pay a visit. Windows are smashed and all fittings destroyed. Three days later the house is burnt down. The Port Melbourne AEC issues a circular to real estate agents warning that "united action" will follow any future eviction attempts. The circular also states "We intend to do all in our power to prevent brutal crimes being committed against our class."
Feb 5 1932, Ballarat.
A single men's camp is established by the UWM after a number of swag men are evicted from bush

camps. An empty house at 162 Main Road is later squatted to house thirty.

February 26 1932, Melbourne.

Three evictions are prevented in Preston and Northcote in one day. When police are caught removing furniture from one house the protesters pick it up and start replacing it. A fight begins, with the police at one point drawing their guns. Eventually however they are overpowered and abandon all evictions scheduled for that day.

March 8 1932, Melbourne.

After a crowd gathers following the eviction of a woman and three children from Carlisle Street police seal off Hotham Street to evict another. Furniture from the houses is taken and dumped at the Town Hall and the Mayor forced to rehouse one of the families. The next day 300 gather for a protest which is attacked and dispersed by police.

March 25 1932, Newcastle.

A widow and daughter in Wickham are given an eviction notice, but 300 picketers move in with a number of women occupying the house. Police Inspector Toohey arrives and is refused entrance to the house. He then agrees to pay the first months rent if a new house can be found for the tenants.

April 1932, Launceston.

Police wait in hiding until a man goes into the city to search for work and then evict his wife and children. The family are later rehoused in an empty property. Another family is helped by the UWM to reoccupy their home after being evicted. The Launceston UWM declares a new policy of "commandeering" empty houses for the homeless.

April 1932, Sydney.

The UWM reports that it prevented 46 evictions in the month of April alone by challenging the cases in the Court of Petty Sessions. Landlords however change their tactics by putting "Direct Expulsion" orders to the Supreme Court. Since the Supreme Court claims it does not have the power to block evictions the landlords are thus able to circumvent the majority of appeals.

May 1932, Launceston.
Police evict people from squatted houses and lay charges of "unlawful possession" against a number of them. All of the cases are later thrown out of court. The UWM mounts a major campaign against one eviction. The house is picketed, the local area is chalked and placarded and large crowds square off with the police. A red flag is flown from the house on Anzac Day and the eviction prevented for a number of weeks.
May 1932, Sydney.
An anti eviction picket in Surrey Hills holds off the police for weeks.
May 13 1932, Sydney.
Eviction resistance at 81 Goodlet St, Surrey Hills sees several hundred people force the police to guarantee that there would be no eviction until a new house is found. Suspicious of the value of a police promise, the UWM continue picketing.
May 20 1932, Wollongong.
Despite resistance a number of unemployed camps are evicted by police and vigilantes.
June 19 1932, Sydney.
Police surround a fortified building at 143 Union St, Newtown where unemployed men have barricaded themselves in against eviction with sandbags and barbed wire. The 18 defenders rain bricks and stones weighing up to a kilo down on 40 police when they try to break in. Armed police then lay down covering fire whilst others break their way into the building. Once inside more shots are fired and all of the defenders are beaten semi-conscious. One man is shot and two others hospitalised with fractured skulls. The *Sydney Morning Herald* describes the room the men were barricaded in as "absolutely bathed in blood." 15 police are injured and later booed by a large crowd when they leave the house. One aged spectator suffers a heart attack from all the excitement and later dies. All arrested are charged under archaic Common Laws and protests against the charges take place across Australia.

"A crowd numbering many thousands gathered in Union Street. They filled the street for a quarter mile on each side of the building until squads of police drove them back about 200 yards and police cordons were thrown across the roadway. At times the huge crowd threatened to become out of hand. It was definitely antagonistic to the police... When one patrol wagon containing prisoners was being driven away, people standing well back in the crowd hurled stones at the police driver."
Sydney Morning Herald, June 20 1931.

June 14 1932, Newcastle.
The Newcastle AEC pickets a house at 30 Clara St, Tighes Hill. 60 police move in to evict and are met by 800 protesters supporting a hard core of 200 picketers. 17 protesters are injured, 3 with fractured skulls, whilst 2 police are treated for concussion. 30 men are charged with assaulting police, but no jury in Newcastle can be found to convict them. The Attorney General Henry E. Manning orders them to be retried in Singleton, but again local sympathies see them acquitted.
July 1932, Wollongong.
UWM members wreck auctions of houses which the unemployed have lost to the banks by outbidding everyone else and then waiting for the crowd to disperse before declaring they have no money.
July 8 1932, Cairns.
About 100 unemployed squat the local showgrounds after being promised accommodation for two months. Several eviction attempts are foiled. Eventually later they are evicted by police aided by 2000 residents and farmers who had been told that the annual Agricultural Show would be cancelled due to the squatters. Fierce fighting breaks out with the unemployed being battered and chased through the backstreets of Cairns.
July 22 1932, Sydney.
The Granville Council is forced to allow an anti eviction meeting to occur in their chambers after pressure from UWM members. The meeting protests the recent eviction of a family by 80 police.
September 1932, Sydney.
A number of eviction warrants are successfully beaten in court by UWM representatives in Glebe and Paddington.
September 30 1932, Sydney.
Men arrested in the Bankstown eviction fight are temporarily freed on bail after a jury disagreement during their appeal trial. Within a short time they lose the appeal and are sent back to prison.
November 29 1932, Melbourne.
A family are evicted from a house in Little Gold Street by Coburg bailiff Williams. A meeting held

that night draws 350 people who put the furniture back in the house and reoccupy it.

January 20 1933, Melbourne.

Mr Zwar, a Member of the State Legislative Assembly has his own house picketed after he evicts a family in Preston.

February 3 1933, Mudgee.

The Workers Weekly reports that an unemployed church goer has been evicted after putting his faith in the courts and rejecting a proposed picket of his home.

February 17 1933, Kurri Kurri.

The Kurri Kurri AEC prepares to set up pickets on three homes threatened with eviction.

April 7 1933, Melbourne.

A real estate agent, Gahan, is caught setting up the unemployed by initially renting houses out cheaply and then hiking the rents once the tenants have settled in. Those who can't make the increases are then evicted. A picket of 200 people confront him at his office and force him to abandon upcoming evictions and to lower his rents.

April 28 1933, Sydney.

Anti eviction groups begin a campaign to prevent a returned soldier from being evicted from 13 Napier St, Paddington.

June 2 1933, Sydney.

Unemployed representatives from 22 groups force 2 delegates from property owners to admit they have been evicting the unemployed. Previously the property owners had denied such actions in the media.

June 1933, Sydney.

The Redfern AEC reports that they have won a number of court cases in June against evictions in their area. However they also report that a number of anti eviction meetings have been broken up by police.

July 1933, Sydney.

The Paddington AEC report that in the last few weeks they have defeated eight evictions in court.

July 14 1933, Sydney.

A mass meeting is held at the Canterbury Town Hall to protest the removal of furniture owned by Mrs Clark, by a finance company.

A FAMILY EVICTED AT RICHMOND

POLICE PREPARED BUT NO TROUBLE

"Star," June 6, 1934.

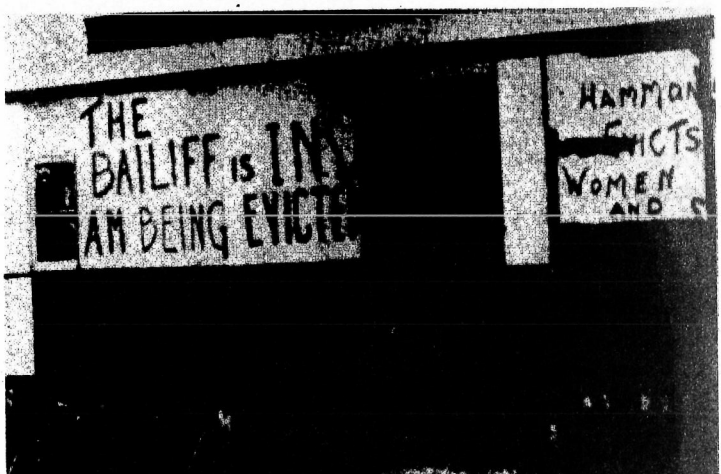
While neighbours in adjacent streets watched from front fences, and a posse of plainclothes police was stationed nearby, Mrs. L. Babinall and her family of seven children were evicted from their house in Duke-street, Richmond, to-day.

Richmond police, fearing trouble, had strong reinforcements ready.

Mr. Babinall was besieged by neighbors tendering offers of help and shelter.

Four mounted police were stationed at the Richmond police yard and nine plainclothes men and more than a dozen uniformed constables were ready in case of trouble. This, however, did not occur.

ELSIE BABINALL, 16, with two of her sisters, outside the house to-day



August 1933, Adelaide.
Adelaide AECs report that their protests and agitation have resulted in a number of workers being reinstated in their homes.
August 13 1933, Sydney.
1000 participate in an anti eviction march.
September 1933, Adelaide.
AECs report that they have been picketing evictions around the eastern suburbs using gongs and chalkings as a warning system.
October 20 1933, Sydney.
After a family of ten are evicted from a house in Alexandria the Redfern AEC rally 500 locals. Unfortunately the police prevent reoccupation.
November 1933, Sydney.
Workmen tear out all the conveniences from a house in Redfern, but the family residing there refuse to leave. Bailiffs and police then arrive and try to evict them without a court order, but a crowd arrives and defeats the illegal action.
November 17 1933, Sydney.
The Paddington AEC are themselves evicted from their offices in the Paddington Town Hall by the Labor Party.
November 24 1933, Sydney.
After police help bailiffs evict a family in Redfern enough local unemployed people are mobilised to reoccupy the house and return the furniture. During the confrontation women chase the bailiffs out of the house and the police are forced to retreat.

"A lot of the younger single men in the Movement lived in Unemployed Single Men's Groups; they lived communally, squatted in terraces around the inner suburbs. They resisted evictions and protected speakers. They were daredevils, political bushrangers..."
Harry in "Weevils in the Flour".

March 1934, Wollongong.
An influx of new workers into Wollongong creates increased evictions for locals as greedy landlords try to cash in. AECs are set up at Port Kembla, Fairy Meadow, Balgownie, Corrimal and Coledale.

April 1934, Adelaide.
Adelaide AECs report that a battle has been raging for months in Adelaide between a number of landlords and tenants. The landlords and police have been using the archaic Common Law "Rogue and Vagabonds" provisions as well as housing acts to imprison those who have been reoccupying houses.
April 16 1934, Temora.
Mass action organised by the Farmers Defence League sees hundreds meet an auctioneer and solicitor at a farm that is to be sold off. The auction is prevented and the bank forced to place a moratorium on the majority of the debt.
June 3 1934, Melbourne.
A mass meeting at the Richmond Town Hall protests evictions.

June 6 1934, Melbourne.
Fearing trouble police bring in four mounted police, a dozen constables and nine plains clothes police to evict one woman and her seven children.
August 1934, Corrimal.
A number of eviction orders are defeated in country NSW when large protests force the local government to withdraw court orders.
August 17 1934, Adelaide.
The Lord Mayor of Adelaide is booed down at an anti eviction meeting called to protest the death of a woman who had been thrown on the street by bailiffs.
January 4 1935, Cairns.
A farmer in the Atherton Tablelands forces bailiffs off his land at gun point on three occasions. The

On June 6, Mrs. Babinall and her babies were evicted. On the same day, the Commonwealth Loan of £12 millions was oversubscribed by £9 millions. This is EQUALITY of SACRIFICE. Good Interest, Big Discounts and Gilt Edged Security for Bondholders. Evictions, Back Lanes and Dust Bins for the Unemployed,

bank proceeds to sell his land from under him to the Forestry Department without compensating him for his loss. When the department plants trees on the land they are torn out by locals. Eventually the Forest Department and the bank are forced to pay him 1200 pounds to move.

June 1935, Bulli.

Over a number of weeks the Illawarra Shire Council attempts to evict unemployed campers at Fairy Meadow. Communist organisers and the Miner's Federation visit the area and pressure the council to provide accommodation for the men.

July 1935, Adelaide.

The Adelaide AEC reports that the police and landlords have gained confidence due to a number of evictions going uncontested. The group also reports that is attempting to turn the situation around by organising against a number of evictions in the central Adelaide area.

July 5 1935, Adelaide.

A man who has been ordered by his doctor not to work for at least twelve months is threatened with eviction. A deputation to the Minister of Employment to talk about the situation is refused. Another one to the landlord, Robert Stamp, sees him assure them that he will go ahead with the eviction. The Goodwood Park AEC then prepares a bulletin describing the case and proceed to distribute it to workers at Foy and Gibson's where Stamp works as the accountant. When Stamp catches them in the act he grabs as many of the bulletins as he can and tears them up. Later that day 200 unemployed again march on the store and confront Stamp. He backs down and the tenants stay.

August 30 1935, Kurri Kurri.

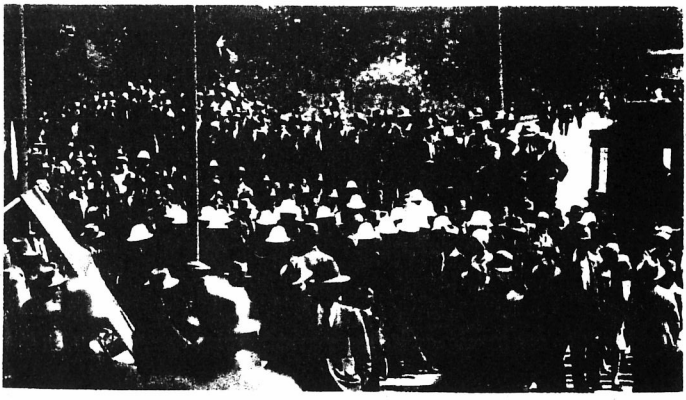
A public meeting resolves to resist the eviction of a Mrs Graham from her house by the Rural Bank of NSW.

September 10 1935, Bulli.

The Bulli AEC begins to organise against the proposed eviction of 50 families who are camping on property at Slacky Flat owned by the Bulli Colliery.

"Batons fell like hail as the police moved forward to break down resistance, and the pickets wielded palings torn from fences and wooden batons, and one man even had a sledge hammer."
***Newcastle Sun*, 1932.**

November 30 1935, Rockhampton.
Unemployed workers residing at 12 North St postpone an eviction after a number of protests.
January & February 1936, NSW.
The Wheat Growers Union reports that a number of its members have been threatened with evictions and that they have been organising to resist any attempts. Reacting to their protests the Stevens Government suspends the proposed eviction of a number of farmers. Despite these moves the eviction threat remains and a meeting of over 200 farmers at Rankins Spring clashes violently with members of the State Government Debts Relief Board. The local media fails in attempts to sideline the struggle by exploiting differences between Anglo farmers and Italian group settlers.
February 7 1936, Manjimup.
The Agricultural Bank serves eviction notices on over twenty group settlers. The farmers begin an anti eviction campaign.
March 6 1936, Sydney.
Tenants renting in Rozelle from a Mr Myerson defeat a rent increase by collecting petitions, holding protests and instituting a rent boycott.
March 27 1936, Sydney.
An attempted eviction of unemployed by Reverend Hammond at Hammondville is defeated when the tenants take up batons and face down the police.
May 15 1936, Manjimup.
A family with nine children get together with six adjacent group settlers to defy attempts by an Agricultural Bank manager, police and six hired thugs to repossess their furniture.
June 16 1936, Sydney.
Camperdown residents defeat a rent increase by instituting a rent boycott.
July 3 1936, Invernay.
A radical Christian defeats an attempt to evict him by putting up huge placards outside his house publicising his case and quoting biblical references to money lenders and poverty. Embarrassed the local council give him a job and guarantee he will not be evicted.
July 1936, Lake Cargellico.
Farmers defeat a number of sell offs by organising a mass boycott of auctions and threatening anyone who dares bid.
July 14 1936, Sydney.
Large protests force a local Church to abandon its proposed eviction of nine different homes.



"We had a very good organisation to fight evictions and one particular Wednesday there was an eviction in Burnley and we got an awful bashing from the police. Someone called a meeting and we decided to do something about it... On the Friday we met at a certain place and divided into groups of two people to each real estate agent... We wrecked every estate agent's window in Richmond with lumps of blue metal. There was hell to pay the next day."

Matt in "Weevils in the Flour".

August 4 1936, Sydney.

Workers involved in demolishing a house refuse to remove its roof when they discover that its tenant, a woman with a husband in hospital, is refusing to leave. The foreman brings in other workers who remove the roof, but when the woman continues to stay put the owner is forced to supply her with accommodation elsewhere and move her furniture free of charge.

August 18 1936, Wakool.

An unemployed camp is evicted by two car loads of police plus armed men from the Water Commission. Despite the weapons the unemployed resist, but are eventually defeated when the police slash their tent ropes and pull down others by hooking them up to cars.

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FAMILY SLEEPS IN LANE—Mother Nurses Her Sick Child

"Star," June 2, 1934.

When arrears of rent caused the eviction yesterday of Mrs. Jessie Compt and her four children from a house in Spring-street Fitzroy, her few pieces of furniture were piled in a back lane adjoining a forge and machine shop. There, huddled about a fire which burned in a dustbin, the family kept a cold and dreary vigil last night, while the thermometer dropped to a minimum of 41 degrees.

To add to Mrs. Crompt's distress she had the worry of nursing a child aged 18 months, who was, until recently, an inmate of the Queen Victoria Hospital, suffering from pneumonia, while she herself has been in poor health since the birth of a child who died a few weeks ago.

EVICTIONS AND FURNITURE SEIZURES.

MUST BE PREVENTED.

Editor "Working Woman."
Newtown, October 22nd.

I have just been forced out of the house I have lived in for the last twenty-six years because I was a few weeks in arrears with the rent. I am sure that we must have paid for the house during the time we lived in it. We kept the house in repair all the time we were living there, and I am sure it was in better condition when we left than when we went into it.

I am sure that one of the greatest worries that working women have to face is this continual fear of being put out of the house or of having their furniture seized by the bailiffs.

After working and slaving for years trying to build up a home this is the result. It is surely time something was done to prevent this kind of thing.

"Worried Housewife."

HOW TO DO IT.

Establish Neighbourhood Vigilance Committees.

We agree with "Worried Housewife" that it is time that something was done to prevent the infamous landlords and bailiffs ejecting people from their homes and seizing furniture, because workers are unable to pay rent.

The Unemployed Workers' Movement is particularly concerned with preventing evictions and furniture seizures, and sets up Neighbourhood Vigilance Committees in each small area. The members of these committees patrol the areas for which they are responsible, finding out where and when

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Material for the "Working Woman" is wanted early.

Due to late arrival of material for the November issue, it has been unavoidably delayed.

SEND IN BY THE 5th OF THE MONTH WHERE POSSIBLE.

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the evictors and bailiffs are expected, and they mobilise the whole of the workers in that area—men, women and children—to be in attendance to prevent the eviction and chase the bailiffs from the neighbourhood.

Other items available from Barricade Publishing.

Barnacle Books Pamphlet #1- Food Not Bombs.

Transcript of a talk given by Food Not Bombs founder Keith McHenry at the 121 Infoshop in 1996.Discusses the history of Food Not Bombs and its role in creating radical social change. 16 pages. $1

#2- Myths of Overpopulation.

A collection of articles by third world and feminist writers exploding the myth of overpopulation and examining the real causes of global hunger and environmental destruction.36 pages. $2

#3- Medical Fraud.

A collection of articles by various HIV dissidents medical researchers, scientists and AIDS survivors. These articles refute the HIV=AIDS=DEATH equation and offer alternatives to the current toxic treatments. 32 pages. $2

Woozy magazine#8,9,13,17,19.

Politics, comics, music and more from this long running Australian zine. $1

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Lock Out The Landlords!

Australian Eviction Resistance 1929- 1936

The economic depression of the 1930s saw tens of thousands of ordinary Australians thrown out of their homes and into the streets. These actions did not go unopposed. Across Australia pickets and protests were organised to disrupt and prevent evictions and auctions. Where these failed many took matters into their own hands and wrecked the properties of landlords and real estate agents in revenge.

This pamphlet chronicles just some of the many struggles that took place. It includes a chronology of actions as well as photos and quotes from those involved. Housing has always been a right and not a privelege and the lessons of the past can provide inspiration for the struggles of today.

Barnacle Books Pamphlet #4

Barricade Publishing